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Examiner: Joseph L. Perrin
Group Art Unit: 1746

REMARKS

Claims 1-8 are currently pending in the application, and have been cancelled. Claims 9-28 have been added and are believed to distinguish over the prior art. The Abstract has been amended in accordance with the Examiner's comments.

It is respectfully submitted that no new matter is added to the application by these amendments. Reconsideration and reexamination is respectfully requested.

Objection to the Abstract

The Abstract stands objected to as containing the word "means" in line 5, which is alleged to be improper legal phraseology. This objection is respectfully traversed. "Means" in line 5 has been replaced with the word "device," thereby removing the grounds for the objection.

Objection to the Claims

Claim 7 stands objected to as allegedly being of improper dependent form for failing to further limit the subject matter of a previous claim. This objection is respectfully traversed. Claim 7 has been cancelled, thereby removing the grounds for the objection.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

Claims 1-4 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,730,006 to Conley. Claims 1-2 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by German Patent No. 2410279 to Parlour et al. These rejections are respectfully traversed.

Claims 1-4 have been cancelled, and the rejections are thus moot. New independent claim 9, which replaced claim 1, discloses an appliance for treating at least one cloth item comprising a collapsible or expandable container comprising a flexible material, the container defining an interior space for enclosing the at least one cloth item, a container opening in the flexible material for accessing the interior space, a humidity provider, a heating element, at least one vent, an air circulation device, a fastener operable between an opened and a closed condition for selectively opening and closing the container opening, and an interlock for locking the

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fastener in the closed condition during the operation of a refreshing/cleaning cycle to prevent accidental opening of the container during the refreshing/cleaning cycle.

Claim 9 is not anticipated by Conley '006. Conley '006 discloses a garment bag for dewrinkling clothing having a zipper-operated opening, but does not disclose an interlock for locking the zipper in the closed condition during the operation of the dewrinkling cycle to prevent accidental opening of the container during the dewrinkling cycle. None of the other references cited by the Examiner, i.e. German Patent No. 2410279 to Parlour et al. and U.S. Patent No. 4,916,439 to Estes et al., disclose an interlock for locking a fastener in a closed condition during the operation of a refreshing/cleaning cycle to prevent accidental opening of a container during the refreshing/cleaning cycle. Thus, claim 9 is not anticipated by either Parlour '279 or Estes '439.

For the same reasons, new claims 10-20, which depend from claim 9, are not anticipated by Conley '006, Parlour '279, or Estes '439. Thus, claims 9-20 are in condition for immediate allowance.

New claim 21 discloses an appliance for refreshing/cleaning at least one cloth item in a refreshing/cleaning cycle, comprising a collapsible container comprising a flexible material, the container defining an interior space for enclosing the at least one cloth item, a humidity provider, a heating element, at least one vent, an air circulation device, and a light source located in the interior space for transmitting light through the flexible material for observation by a user during a refreshing/cleaning cycle.

Conley '006 discloses a display panel 65' containing a plurality of cycle indicator lights 66' which is mounted at an exterior corner of the garment dewrinkler. *Col. 5, ln. 66 – col. 6, ln. 7; Fig. 8.* Conley '006 does not disclose a light source located in the interior space of the garment dewrinkler for transmitting light through the walls of the garment dewrinkler. Neither do Parlour '279, nor Estes '439. Thus, claim 21 is not anticipated by Conley '006, Parlour '279, or Estes '439.

For the same reasons, new claims 22-28, which depend from claim 21, are not anticipated by Conley '006, Parlour '279, or Estes '439. Thus, claims 21-28 are in condition for immediate allowance.

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Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 5, 6, and 8 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Conley '006 in view of Estes '439. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claims 5, 6, and 8 have been cancelled, and the rejection is thus moot. Because neither Conley '006 nor Estes '439 discloses an interlock for locking a fastener in a closed condition during the operation of a refreshing/cleaning cycle to prevent accidental opening of a container during the refreshing/cleaning cycle, the combination of these references cannot disclose the interlock described in claim 9, and thus cannot render claim 9 obvious. Similarly, because neither Conley '006 nor Estes '439 discloses a light source located in the interior space of a cloth treating appliance for transmitting light through a flexible material for observation by a user during a refreshing/cleaning cycle, the combination of these references cannot disclose the light source described in claim 21, and thus cannot render claim 21 obvious.

Since Parlour '279 discloses neither the interlock described in claim 9 nor the light source described in claim 21, no combination of Conley '006, Parlour '279, or Estes '439 can render claims 9 or 21 obvious.

For these same reasons, dependent claims 10-20 and 22-28 are not obvious. Thus, claims 9-28 are in condition for immediate allowance.

It is respectfully submitted that all of the pending claims in the application are allowable over the prior art of record. Early notification of allowability is respectfully requested.

If there are any questions regarding this matter, please contact the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,

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Dated: 3/31/04

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